

BTEC Business and Enterprise Learner of the Year

Lily Carcaterra



Lily Carcaterra, winner of the Business and Enterprise Learner of the Year and our overall Young Learner of the Year 2021 is an incredible example of strength and determination, overcoming significant odds to achieve an offer of a place at a prestigious university with a predicted triple star distinction in her Level 3 Extended Diploma in Business.

Working several part-time jobs to help her family make ends meet, and helping to look after her disabled sister, Lily still finds a way to give her studies the effort and focus required. "Lily's one of the hardest working students I have come across," says lecturer Tracy Thomas. "Her ability to achieve and deal with everything else in her life is unbelievable. She thrives on every challenge and will push through until she achieves what she knows will open doors for her! I take my hat off to her."

After being made homeless during her A-Levels, Lily describes herself as feeling lost. She left her A-Level studies, but her innate thirst for

knowledge and her interest in business led her to explore a BTEC option instead. "When I had the opportunity to study at NSCG, I knew immediately that BTEC was the path for me - the exam/learning style suits me perfectly," she says.

Joanne Wilson, Group Head of Marketing & PR for Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group, describes Lily as relentlessly resilient. "Lily has continued through the course with a strong work ethic and commitment, achieving high grades throughout, which is a testament to Lily's commitment, determination to succeed and strong willpower." Lecturer Fran Hitchen adds to this saying: "Lily had a complex start to her teenage life. External barriers to her learning have impacted heavily, but she knows how important her education is and has always strived to achieve highly in everything she does."

Another of Lily's lecturer's, Ruth Daniel, says "Lily is relentlessly positive and is always willing to open up about every challenge she faces. She is not afraid

to share her experience with her peers and encourage them, despite what she faces in life herself." Indeed, Lily's caring nature has led to her taking on additional volunteer roles – as a Student Representative for her tutorial group and Female Student Officer within the Student Union, as well as volunteering at St George's Hospital (Stafford), supporting sexual assault/abuse victims. "I'm a strong advocate for others and believe everyone has a voice that deserves to be heard and, acted upon fairly," says Lily. She was accepted onto a Law and Human Rights Internship in South Africa during 2019, which unfortunately was cancelled due to Covid-19, but she says she would love to pursue that in the future.

Describing her BTEC studies, Lily says: "I feel incredibly passionate about my course/subject. Business is a subject area that genuinely interests me and as time has gone on, I have discovered that I have a natural flair for it and my confidence has grown massively. The course structure has allowed me to

discover my strengths and develop them, and I believe that if I work hard enough, I can achieve anything that I put my mind to.

"My course has allowed me to grow my genuine interest for not only the area of business operations in terms of profitability and success but, also an interest for the human aspects of business; organisational behaviours and why employees and customers think, feel and behave the way they do. This led to me securing a place at Aston University to study a BSc in Psychology and Business. My vision is for this to lead on to an NHS Graduate Scheme and a career in Human Resource Management."

Summing up, Joanne Wilson says: "To say Lily has had it tough is a complete understatement. But she has thrown everything she can at her course, to ensure she is able to go to university in September. Her hardworking nature, determination, focus and resilience is truly remarkable."